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**FIRST ANNUAL FIRE/EMS EXPLORER WEEKEND HELD AT THE TENNESSEE FIRE
SERVICE AND CODES ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY**

BELL BUCKLE, TN – Young adults from across the state of Tennessee attended the first annual Fire/EMS Explorer Weekend April 11-13 at the Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy located in Bedford County. Ranging in ages from 14 to 18, these explorers had the opportunity to observe and participate in a wide variety of emergency service activities.

From classroom to hands-on training, these young men and women were instructed in the proper use of hand tools, how to tie ropes and knots, fire-ground safety and the loading of hose onto fire trucks. The explorer weekend agenda also included a movie night and an explorer combat challenge.

Erron Kinney, Tight End with the Tennessee Titans and volunteer firefighter for the Williamson County Rescue Squad was in attendance. Erron urged the explorers to make a career in the emergency services. But he points out that regardless of their future career path, they can always do what he has done-serve the community as a volunteer firefighter.

"Interest in emergency services has increased due to the tragic events that have fallen on this nation," stated David E. Hedrick, Fire Service program Director for the Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy. "Proper training is more important now than at any other time and these explorers are being groomed to become our next generation of firefighters and emergency responders. Their enthusiasm is endless."

"I am excited to be able to attend the explorer weekend," stated Amanda Deason, fire explorer from the City of Shelbyville Fire Department. Amanda, who hopes to one day follow in her father and grandfathers footsteps, said that she has always dreamed of becoming a firefighter. "I have

been around firefighters my entire life. Being able to participate in this program allows me to better prepare for firefighter training in the future.” Shelbyville Fire Department will also be on hand to demonstrate “live” fire scenarios.

“This event represents a significant milestone in the State of Tennessee,” according to Ray Crouch, Sr. Fire Management Consultant with the University of Tennessee and Chairman of the weekend event. “Tennessee has been far behind other states in fire service training, but with the opening of this new Fire and Codes Academy and the support of the great staff that they have here, the fire service of Tennessee has made some giant leaps forward. We have the General Assembly and both our past and current Governors to thank for having this great facility.”

Approximately 80 explorers and youth leaders participated in the event, which is co-sponsored by the Middle Tennessee Council of the Boy Scouts of America, the University of Tennessee’s MTAS and the Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy.